



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## Book Reviews.

---

**Die urchristlichen Gemeinden: Sittengeschichtliche Bilder.** Von ERNST VON DOBSCHÜTZ. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1902. Pp. xiv+293. M. 6.

This is distinctively a study in the history of morals. General questions of church history are wholly subordinated to the question how the early church developed a Christian morality, taking the place here of the ancient Jewish, there of the heathen, and the degree of its success in giving reality to this moral ideal. The work thus fills out the history of Christian ethics for that period of the beginnings not adequately covered by Lecky, and bridges the interval between his *History of European Morals* and Friedländer's *Sittengeschichte Roms*.

The author has had as predecessors in the field of the history of Christian morals Thoma, Gass, Bestmann, Ziegler, and Luthardt; but, as he himself points out, the special moral conditions of the apostolic age, investigation of which was specially urged by Ritschl, have scarcely been scrutinized by the great critics and historians of the period. Aside from the glances of Lechler and Weizsäcker, only the address of Kähler at the mission conference of Saxony, held at Halle, 1894, on "The Just Appreciation of the Apostolic Churches from the New Testament," seems to our author to attempt, in a more superficial way, the task which he has set himself to accomplish by methodical and exhaustive treatment.

Needless to say that von Dobschütz brings to this task the full equipment of exact and comprehensive scholarship. Beginning with the description of the morality of Christians in the Apology of Aristides, he contrasts with this favorable representation, by a defender of the persecuted church, the contemporary complaints of Hermas, a zealot for moral reform. This serves to formulate his problem. What was theory, and what was actual practice, in the church of 125-50 A. D.? What effect had the ethics of Jesus then produced?

The questions set are answered by a study in succession (1) of the Pauline churches in Corinth, Macedonia, Asia Minor, and Rome; (2) of the Jewish Christian churches and Judaizing propaganda; (3) of the later gentile Christianity. Under the last division are included the

churches under continued Pauline influence in Asia Minor, Rome, and Corinth, the Johannine circle, the beginnings of Gnosticism, and the churches of the period of transition to catholic unity. Six excursions are added in the form of appendixes. These deal with "Ancient Statistics," "Slavery in Antiquity," "The Ecclesiastical Trial in Corinth," "James the Lord's Brother," "Ancient Vegetarianism," and "The Terminology of Ethics."

At the end of his review of Christian morality in the first century of its operation in the various churches, our author draws the conclusion that the laudatory description of Aristides is justified. The morality of heathenism was bankrupt. Christianity not only brought in a new ideal, but critical scrutiny of the sources proves that it supplied the moral dynamic to give it practical realization. The morality of Judaism required no such transformation, but it too was infused with new life.

On the other hand, the commonly assumed moral relapse of the post-apostolic age is simply a mistake. Enthusiasm, spirituality, the inspiration and fire of religious genius, disappear; but the work of realizing the moral ideal is continued. Only toward the close of the second century does the ascetic ideal of the East begin to tinge Christian morality with its physical rather than moral dualism. Against it Christianity reacts, not only in the outward conflict against Gnosticism, but inwardly by a progressive repudiation of the alien conception. Its ultimate triumph over the Roman empire was not by virtue of a better philosophical or moral system, but as "organized beneficence," driven forward by the moral impulse of its great Founder. The second-century apologists make a true and unanswerable appeal to fact in pointing to the lives of common laborers and old women, controlled by the law of love, as the proof that their faith is "the victory that hath overcome the world."

A study of the facts by a scholar and critic so unbiased and competent as von Dobschütz cannot fail to meet a welcome at the hands of all students of the history of ethics. Not only so, but, if Christianity is to be judged by its fruits, the facts reviewed are certainly of too much importance to be neglected, whether by apologist or critic. The author's purpose is well carried out.

BENJ. W. BACON.

YALE UNIVERSITY,  
New Haven, Conn.